



Connecticut Students for a Dream

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Testimony to the Human Services of the Connecticut General Assembly

March 10th, 2022

Testimony Regarding SB284 An Act Increasing The Age From Eight To Eighteen Years For An Income Eligible Person To Obtain Medical Assistance Regardless Of Immigration Status

Dear Members and Honorable Chairs of the Human Services of Connecticut General Assembly:

We, Connecticut Students for a Dream (C4D), stand in support of S.B. No. 284: “An Act Increasing The Age From Eight To Eighteen Years For An Income Eligible Person To Obtain Medical Assistance Regardless Of Immigration Status”.

C4D is a statewide, youth-led network that fights for the rights of undocumented immigrant youth and their families. We do this through community organizing, leadership development, and advocacy. We are proud to be the only organization in Connecticut that is led by and for immigrant youth directly impacted by the issues we seek to address. Our membership is composed of undocumented immigrant youth ages 13-24 throughout the state of Connecticut.

CT Students for a Dream and our membership supports SB284: passing this bill is the right thing to do as all youth need access to healthcare to lead healthy lives. Many of our members would directly benefit from the bill and be able to access the healthcare they need to lead healthy lives.

In 2021, the CT General Assembly passed Public Act No. 21-176, which provided access to HUSKY for undocumented immigrant children ages 0-8 years old and pre and postnatal care for undocumented immigrant pregnant women. This was a great first step, and SB284 is a better improvement. Passage of SB 284 this year would ensure that children will not age out of coverage once they turn 9 years old and be left without healthcare. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve - the Connecticut Legislature must pass Senate Bill 284.

In the long term, we need ALL our immigrant communities and our families to have access to healthcare. Connecticut's work cannot end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.. The state of Connecticut must create a long term plan to expand HUSKY access to our whole immigrant community. This forward progress must keep going.

If we want healthy kids, the best way to achieve that is to have healthy parents - but currently, we're leaving undocumented parents behind. In CT, 37% of undocumented adults have children under 18¹. These are our member's parents, we see everyday how the lack of healthcare access impacts them and their lives. If CT wants to ensure immigrant children have access to care, we need the adults in their lives to have health coverage too.

¹ “Profile of the Unauthorized Population - CT.” Migrationpolicy.org, 1 June 2020, www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/CT

Children do better when their parents do better. It has been proven that when parents and caregivers have access to health care, their children are more likely to be insured and to use and receive care. Research has proven that in other states Medicaid coverage expansion for adults has produced higher Medicaid coverage for children, and that children are 29% more likely to have an annual well-child visit if parents are enrolled in Medicaid². This is because when parents have healthcare coverage, they are more likely to understand how to make use of healthcare coverage for their children.

As we look to Connecticut's future, where we value fairness, wellness, and opportunities for all to succeed, we cannot afford to sit idly by and do nothing about the lack of access to affordable health insurance. Today, this Committee can send a bold message that our state and its legislators support the dreams of young people, believe in equality for Connecticut residents regardless of immigration status, and are committed to seeing Connecticut residents healthy and thriving.

C4D and our membership views this bill as an essential step in ensuring that all CT's immigrants can have an equal opportunity to access affordable health insurance. We strongly stand in support of S.B. 284 and urge the Committee to vote favorably and ensure that this legislation becomes reality.

On behalf of the C4D Community,

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² Venkataramani M, Pollack CE, Roberts ET. Spillover Effects of Adult Medicaid Expansions on Children's Use of Preventive Services. *Pediatrics*. 2017 Dec;140(6):e20170953. doi: 10.1542/peds.2017-0953. Epub 2017 Nov 13. PMID: 29133576.